



MODERN DAY SLAVERY



**27 MILLION
PEOPLE ENSLAVED
WORLDWIDE**

Written by Mel Merriweather

When most hear the term "slavery" a past time is often thought of. However, slavery is not just a part of history, it is also an ongoing modern day issue. The issue that is preying on Houston communities and all Houstonians should be well aware of is Human Trafficking.

According to The Department of Justice \$9.5 billion is generated annually worldwide

Human trafficking is modern day slavery. Victims of human trafficking are subjected to force, fraud, or persuasion, for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor. Victims are young children, teenagers, men, and women.

The Department of Justice estimates that human trafficking is the third most profitable criminal activity in the world after drug and arms trafficking, with an estimated \$9.5 billion generated annually globally.

Texas is the center for international human trafficking because of interstate highways, international airports, shipping commerce through the Gulf of Mexico, and the shared border with Mexico. The border serves as North America's busiest supply site for young children used in sex and labor trafficking.

Due to Houston being the fourth largest city in Texas and one of the largest international communities in the country Houston is number one on the U.S top twenty human trafficking jurisdictions in the country. In the last quarter of 2007, 30% of the calls received by the National Human Trafficking Hotline were out of Texas and 25% of all international victims certified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services were in Texas. The high number of runaways also contribute to the staggering amount of underage minors in the slave trades.

According to National Runaway Hotline, an estimated one out of every three children that run away is lured into sex trafficking within 48 hours of leaving home. The average age of entry into sex trafficking is between 12 and 14 years old. As law enforcement we care about these victims because of contempt for the value of human life and sex trafficking is an affront to human dignity.

For these victims **Harris County's Precinct 7** has **the Crime Victims Assistance Program**. The program is governed by the Crime Victim Assistance Act and Regulations. Under the Texas Crime Victims Assistance Act and Regulations, victims injured as a result of certain crimes, such as human trafficking may be eligible for financial assistance or benefits.

The Harris County Precinct 7 Victims' Services Unit is here to work with victims living and their families to ensure that all victims receive their rights as guaranteed by the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Act, (Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 56). We are committed to providing high quality services, emergency assistance, guidance, support, referrals, compassion, and understanding.

As reported by National Runaway Hotline, "One out of every three children that run away is lured into sex trafficking within 48 hours of leaving home"

Help is just a phone call away.

If you, yourself, or know someone who is in need of help please contact us.

Precinct 7 Crime Victim's Assistance Unit

713.274.3521- Pct. 7 Victims' Coordinator
713.274.3566- Pct. 7 Victims' Sergeant